

## ***FISH and WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET***

**Meeting Date:** August 10, 2017  
**Agenda Item:** Future Fisheries French Creek Amendment  
**Division:** Fisheries  
**Action Needed:** Final  
**Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation:** 10 Min

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### **Background**

The Future Fisheries Improvement Program provides funds for projects that restore fishery habitats in streams, rivers and lakes for the benefit of wild fisheries. Applications are reviewed twice each year by a 14-member Citizen Review Panel appointed by the Governor and recommendations are reviewed by the Fish & Wildlife Commission every six months for consideration and approval. Once a project is approved, funds expended “must be used for the protection of the fisheries resource that have been identified by the review panel...and approved by the Commission” [Montana Code 87-1-272].

French Creek fish barrier (project number RIT003-2014) is part of the French Gulch restoration complex (Deerlodge County, Mount Haggin Wildlife Management Area) intended to restore habitat degraded by placer mining and protect Arctic Grayling and Westslope Cutthroat trout. The overall restoration includes four approved Future Fisheries grant awards: three for stream restoration and one for the fish barrier. Stream restoration has been completed; the next step is the barrier construction. The final steps include removal of fish above the barrier using Rotenone and re-stocking of native Westslope Cutthroat and Arctic Grayling. French Creek channel restoration was completed under budget (\$72,752.98), and the French Creek barrier was recently estimated over budget (approximately \$73,000). The total cost of the barrier is estimated at \$298,281. This request is to move \$72,752.98 from project number RIT028-2015 and RIT006-2016 to project number RIT003-2014 to contribute to the funds needed for barrier completion. All Future Fisheries projects have been assessed by the State Historical Preservation Office and have undergone environmental assessment and public comment.

### **Public Involvement Process and Results**

The public was involved in the review and approval of all the referenced Future Fisheries projects through Citizen Review Panel meetings, Fish & Wildlife Commission meetings, the environmental assessment process, and the opportunity to access applications and submit comments online through the FWP website.

### **Alternatives and Analysis**

- A. The Commission could approve the project amendment, allowing \$72,752.98 to be transferred from project numbers RIT028-2015 and RIT006-2016 to RIT003-2014. This alternative would provide funds to complete the fish barrier in French Creek and improve habitat for native fish.
- B. The Commission could disapprove or modify the recommendation. Under this alternative, alternative sources of funding would be needed or barrier construction would be suspended.

### **Agency Recommendation and Rationale**

FWP recommends the Commission approve Alternative A, transferring \$72,752.98 of Future Fisheries funding to the French Creek fish barrier. Completion of this project would benefit Arctic Grayling and Westslope Cutthroat Trout populations. The Citizen Review Panel has approved Alternative A.

### **Proposed Motion**

I move the Fish and Wildlife Commission approve the proposed amendment, transferring \$72,752.98 to project number RIT003-2014 within the Future Fisheries Improvement Program.